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THE CRIB OF CHRIST.

The crib of Christ, which was set up in the churches at Christmas, contained figures of the Holy Family as well as an ox and an ass. The congregations danced around it, singing carols.¹ This singing and dancing was a survival of the pagan ritual of the feast of the winter solstice, which the Church could not abolish.² The first Christmas crib is said to have been set up by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223.³

Hermann Usener has shown that the 25th of December was not observed as the feast of the Nativity before 354 A. D.⁴ In his article on the Nativity narratives in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* (col. 3344, § 6), he says that the addition of an ox and ass to the manger is due to popular imagination, partly influenced by the liturgy;⁵ but we read in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew,⁶ which may have been

¹ The last lines of the old *Dreikönigslied* in the "Kinderlieder" appended to *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* are: "Es waren da zwei unvernünftige Tier', | Sie fielen nieder auf ihre Knie. | Das Oechselein und das Eselein, | Die kannten Gott den Herren rein. | Amen." The last stanza of *Christkindleins Wiegenlied* begins: "Schweig, Eselein, still, | Das Kind schlafen will, | Ei Oechse nicht brüll', | Das Kind schlafen will." In the third stanza of a *Wiegenlied* we have: "Eya! Eya! schweig, du trautes Kindelein, | Es beisst dich sonst ein Eselein, | Und stösst dich Josephs Oechselein zu Bethlehem." See Eduard Grisebach's new edition of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 835-837; cf. Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder* (Leipsic, 1907), p. li, note 59.

² See Haupt, *Purim* (Leipsic, 1906), p. 11, line 11.

³ See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 5, p. 379b.

⁴ See Lagarde, *Mitteilungen*, Vol. 4 (Göttingen, 1891), p. 311; cf. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 6, p. 293.

⁵ It may have been suggested by Luke xiii. 15 where we find ox and ass in connection with *phátne*; but the fact that *phátne* means *manger* in Luke xiii. 15 does not prove that it has the same meaning in Luke ii. 7, 12, 16; the first two chapters of the Third Gospel were not written by St. Luke; see the beginning of my paper "The Child in Luke i. 76," in *The Monist*, April, 1919.

⁶ The *Evangelium Pseudo-Matthæi* (Chapter XIV) says: "Tertio autem die nativitatis Domini egressa est beata Maria de spelunca, et ingressa est stabulum, et posuit puerum in presepio, et bos et asinus adorabant eum. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Isaiam prophetam dicentem: Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus presepe domini sui. Ipsa enim animalia, scilicet asinus et bos, in medio eum habentes incessanter adorabant eum. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Habacuc prophetam dicentem: In medio duorum animalium innotesceris." See J. C. Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Leipsic, 1832), p. 384; cf. Tischendorf's edition in his *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 2d ed. (Leipsic, 1876), and the translation in K. F. Borberg, *Die apokryphischen Evangelien und Apostelgeschichten* (Stuttgart, 1841), p. 268; also E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen* (Tübingen, 1904), p. 25* and p. 47. Thilo calls the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew *Historia de nativi-*

compiled about 350, that when Mary placed the Babe in the manger, ox and ass worshiped Him,⁷ thus fulfilling the prophecies of Is. i. 3 (*The ox minds its owner, and the ass its master*)⁸ and Hab. iii. 2, where we find in the Greek Bible for Heb. *bě-qərb shanīm hayyéhû*, which is supposed to mean *In the midst of the years revive it*, the rendering *en méso dyo zóon gnosthésē*,⁹ followed by a second interpretation of this clause: *en to engízein ta éte gnosthésē*.¹⁰ This second rendering was adopted by J. D. Michaelis who translated in 1782: *wenn die Jahre herankommen*, when the years approach.

The reading *bi-qěrób* is undoubtedly better than the *bě-qərb* of the received text; *qěrób*, however, is not the infinitive construct of the verb *qaráb*, to approach, but the construct state of a substantive *qarôb*, approach, proximity, nearness, which appears in Arabic as *qarâb*.¹¹ In Ezek. vii. 8 we have *miq-qarôb*, shortly, soon.

tate Mariae et infantia Salvatoris, but in the oldest manuscript it is entitled *Liber de ortu beatae Mariae et infantia Salvatoris a beato Matthaeo evangelista Hebraice scriptus et a beato Hieronymo presbytero in Latinum translatus*; see Holtzmann, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2d ed. (Freiburg i. B., 1886), p. 540; cf. Hauck's *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3d ed., Vol. 1 (Leipsic, 1896), p. 656, line 48; Vol. 13 (Leipsic, 1903), p. 313; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 2, p. 179b; Vol. 17, pp. 812a and 814a; Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 776, note *.

⁷ Cf. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 288b, line 5.

⁸ *Crib* is a gloss; the meter is 2 + 2.

⁹ The view that this is a patristic interpolation (see *The Open Court*, No. 706, p. 191) is unwarranted; cf. also the conclusion of Dr. Rudwin's paper *Die Prophetensprüche und -zitate im religiösen Drama des Mittelalters* in Vol. 50, Part 3, of *Saat auf Hoffnung* (Leipsic, 1913).

¹⁰ The doublets in the Greek Version have been explained by Louis Capel; see the quotation in Laur. Reinke, *Der Prophet Habakuk* (Brixen, 1870), p. 133. Happel, *Das Buch des Propheten Habakuk* (Würzburg, 1900), p. 47, remarks: "Unter den beiden Tieren verstand S. Hier[onymus] und S. Aug[ustinus] nach Zach. 9, 9: Matt. 21, 2-7 [contrast *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 35, p. 288] die Juden- und Heidenkirche oder die beiden Testamente. Die Beziehung auf Ochs und Esel an der Krippe des Herrn, die zuerst im Evang. Ps. Matthäi [cf. above, note 6] genannt werden, wird fälschlich Orig[enes], Ambros[ius], Gregor[ius] Nyss[enus], i. e., St. Gregory of Nyssa, c. 331-396] zugeschrieben," with the reference: "Knabenb. l. c. p. 96," i. e., *Commentarius in Prophetas Minores auctore J. Knabenbauer*, Parisiis, 1886. Geo. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* (London, 1898), Vol. 2, p. 157, refers to St. Augustine's exposition of the Septuagintal version of this Psalm in *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, 32.

¹¹ There is no evidence that there was a noun *qorb*, proximity, in Hebrew, although we have *qurbâ* in Syriac, and *qurb* in Arabic. For French *prochainement*, German *nächstens*, we find in Syriac: *bě-qurbâ* or *min-qurbâ*; but also *qěrabâ* (which means, as a rule, *war*, originally *approach*, *attack*) signifies *nearness* (like *qarribûthâ* or *mithqarbanûthâ*). For Syr. *min-qurbâ* we have in Arabic: *'an-qaribin* or *'an-qurbin*, and in addition to *qurb*, nearness (in place, time, or relation), we have also *qarâb*, which appears in Hebrew as *qarôb*. In Ethiopic we find *qěrabâ* or *ba-qěrab*, near.

We can just as well say *bě-qarôb*. The phrase *bi-qêrôb shanîm* means literally *in the nextness of years*, i. e., *in the next (few) years*.¹² In German you say for *in the next (few) days* either *in den nächsten Tagen* or *nächster Tage*. The clause *bě-qêrb shanîm hayyêhû*, revive it in the midst of the years, is meaningless, and even if we read *bě-qêrb shênáim* (or *shênê*) *hayyîm*, this could not mean *in medio duorum animalium*.¹³ Heb. *hayyîm* signifies *vivi*, not *animalia*, and *duo animalia* would be *shtáim* (or *shtê*) *hayyôth*; but ox and ass would not be called *hayyôth*, which denotes *wild beasts*, and while we might say *bě-qêrb hayyôth rabbôth*, in the midst of many beasts, we should expect *bên shtê hayyôth*, between two beasts. If a Hebrew writer wanted to say that bezoar-stones had been found in the stomach of two wild goats, he might use the phrase *bě-qêrb shtáim hayyôth*.

Louis Cappel (1650) suggested reading *hawwêhû*, indicate it, instead of *hayyêhû*, revive it. The clause *bi-qêrôb shanîm hawwêhû* is a gloss (or variant) to *bi-qêrôb shanîm tôdî'*, but instead of *tôdî'* we must read the passive *tiwwadé'*. The couplet prefixed to the Maccabean psalm in the third chapter of the Book of Habakkuk should be restored as follows:

<i>Yahwê shamá'tî shim'éka</i>	<i>wě-ra'ithî êlôhái p'léka</i>
^a <i>Bi-qêrôb shanîm tiwwadé'</i>	<i>bi-rógz rahhém tizkór.</i>

(^a) *bi-qêrôb shanîm hawwêhû*

O JHVH, I heard of Thy fame,	I shall see, O my God, Thy work.
^a Thou'lt manifest Thyself in the	in wrath Thou'lt remember
near future,	mercy.

(^a) indicate it in the near future

This couplet should be followed by verses 15, 16. The *sea* and the *foam of the waters*, into which JHVH is to drive His steeds,

¹² See Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford, 1898), § 128, r.

¹³ Grotius (1644) remarks ad Hab. iii. 2: "Graeci pro *shanîm* (annorum) legerunt hoc loco *hayyîm*; vertunt enim *en mēso dyo zōon*, in medio duorum animalium, quod illi videntur intellexisse de illis coelestibus Potestatibus quae *hayyôth*, Animalia, apud Ezechielem. Quam variis modis Christiani haec sint interpretati vide Hieronymum." J. C. Doederlein adds in his edition of Grotius's *Annotiones* (1776): "Legerunt potius *shênê hayyîm*." According to G. J. L. Vogel, *in medio annorum* means *in nostra aetate* (contrast *bě-ahrith hash-shanîm*, in the latter years, Ezek. xxxviii. 8). *Bě-qêrb shanîm*, however, cannot have this meaning, although Syr. *qarrîbê* denotes *those of the present age*, the adjective *qarrîb* signifying not only *near*, but also *contemporary*. We use *proximo* for the next or the coming month.

denote the Syrian persecution.¹⁴ The poet hopes that JHVH's wrath (cf. 1 Macc. i. 64) will be appeased in the near future. The interpretation given in the Evangelium Pseudo-Matthaei, *in medio duorum animalium innotesceris*, is impossible; there is no reference to ox and ass or any other two animals in this passage of the Book of Habakkuk.

Nor did Mary place the Babe in a manger; *phátne* in Luke ii. 7, 12, 16 denotes one of the recesses in front of the travelers' chambers¹⁵ along the interior court of a caravansary.¹⁶ Shakespeare uses *crib* in the sense of *small chamber*, small lodging or habitation (cf. the use of *box* for a small country-house): at the beginning of the third act of the second part of *Henry IV* (lines 11, 14) the King apostrophizes Sleep:

"Why rather liest thou in smoky cribs. . .
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great?"

We may therefore render *phátne* in Luke ii. 7 by *crib*. The primary connotation of *phátne* is *hollow* or *cavity*. Diodorus Siculus (I, 66, 4) uses *phátnai* for *lacunars*, i. e., sunk compartments of a coffered ceiling. *Phátne* is a doublet of *páthne* (cf. *kithón* = *chitón*) which may be connected with Greek *bóthros* and Lat. *fossa*. The corresponding Hebrew word is *rahîť*. In Arabic, *rúhatah* or *rúhaťā'* is synonymous with *qâċi'ā'*, burrow of a jerboa. The Greek Bible has *phát-noma* for Heb. *rahîť* in Cant. i. 17;¹⁷ we find this word also in 2 Macc. i. 16 where *he tou phatnómatos kryptē thyra* denotes the trap-door of the paneled ceiling (not *the privy door of the roof*, as the Authorized Version renders). *Phatnómata* is used also for *port-holes* or *loopholes*¹⁸ in the sides of a ship and for the sockets

¹⁴ Cf. the explanation of the Maccabean psalm in the second chapter of the book of Jonah in my paper "Jonah's Whale" on p. 163 of the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, April 20, 1907 (Vol. 46). See also *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, Vol. 23, p. 258, note 3.

¹⁵ See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, col. 2170, line 46; contrast col. 2171, line 27; Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 234b.

¹⁶ A good many first-cabin passengers, who went from Marseilles to Algiers on April 17, 1905, to attend the Fourteenth International Congress of Orientalists, had to sleep on mattresses in the corridors between the state-rooms, because the steamer ("Général Chanzy") was overcrowded.

¹⁷ Cf. Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder* (Leipsic, 1907), p. 63, note * and p. 124.

¹⁸ In Zeph. ii. 14 the Septuagintal *phatnómata* may denote *recesses* in the walls; cf. my remarks in the *Journal of the Society for Oriental Research*, Vol. 1, p. 4. The Hebrew original has *kaťťôr*, capital of a column; but the Ancient Versions did not understand this word: the Vulgate has *limen*; the Targum: *pittáh tá'ā*, sculptures of the door; the Peshita: *báťťē*, houses. The Authorized Version renders: *upper lintels*; the Revised Version: *chapiters*.

(*alveoli*) of the teeth. *Alveolus* signifies not only a *trough* or basin, but any small hollow or cavity.

There is a very early tradition that Jesus was born in a cave near Bethlehem. Many khans have caverns below them where cattle are sheltered. The traditional scene of the Nativity is a grotto on the eastern part of the lime ridge on which Bethlehem is situated. A basilica was built over it by the emperor Constantine in 330. C. R. Conder says that in the Hebron hills there are many rock-cut stables for cattle, which resemble the cave under the choir of the basilica at Bethlehem.¹⁹

The Jewish-Christian legend of the Nativity states in Luke ii. 7 that Mary laid the Babe in a *phátne*, because there was no room in the *katályma*. In Mark xiv. 14, Luke xxii. 11 *katályma* denotes the dining-room (Greek *anágaion*) where Jesus wanted to celebrate the Passover with His disciples. The Vulgate has *diversorium* in Luke xxii. 11, but *refectio* in Mark xiv. 14.²⁰ In 1 Sam. ix. 22 the Greek Bible uses *katályma* for Heb. *lishkâ* which has passed into Greek as *lésche*. Heb. *lishkâ* denotes a *banquet-hall* for sacrificial feasts like the Assyrian *bît akîti*.²¹ These halls were used not only for banquets, but also as inns.²² A synonym of *lishkâ* is *bêth-léhem*, eating-house. Heb. *léhem* signifies not only *bread*, but also *food*, repast, feast. The edifice which Samson pulled down was a *bêth-léhem*. In 1 Sam. xx. 8 *bêth-léhem* denotes a *banquet-house* in which David wanted to celebrate the New Year with his clan, and in 2 Sam. xxiii. 15 *bêth-léhem* refers to the *mess-hall* in the camp of the Philistines in the Valley of Rephaim.²³ There are no springs at Bethlehem; the Masoretic text reads therefore in 2 Sam. xxiii. 15 *bôr*, cistern, instead of *bêr*, spring.

The name Beth-lehem, which is generally supposed to mean House of Bread,²⁴ does not allude to the fertility of the neighbor-

¹⁹ See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 281a; Vol. 3, p. 235a. In Saxon Switzerland there is a cave known as the *Kuhstall* (cow-stable). The peasants are said to have sheltered their cattle there during the Thirty Years' War.

²⁰ Contrast Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 474b.

²¹ See note 89 to my paper, "Was David an Aryan?" in No. 753 of *The Open Court* (February, 1919), p. 89.

²² Cf. *Odyssey*, XVIII, 328, and *Encyclopædia Biblica*, col. 721, note 1.

²³ See p. 90 of my paper cited above, in note 21.

²⁴ Nor does the second element of the name represent the god Lakhmu mentioned in the first fragment of the cuneiform Creation tablets; cf. R. W. Rogers, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, Especially in Its Relations to Israel* (New York, 1908), p. 108; Zimmern on p. 214 of the *Hommel-Festschrift in Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1916).

hood, but is derived from an ancient hospice or hostelry (Heb. *gerûth*, from *ger*, stranger) near Bethlehem,²⁵ on the highroad from Jerusalem to Hebron, which is mentioned in Jer. xli. 17.²⁶ The Authorized Version renders: *the habitation of Chimham*; the Revised Version has *Geruth Chimham*, and in the margin: *the lodging-place of Chimham*. This ancient caravansary may have been founded by Chimham ben-Barzillai who followed David to Jerusalem when the aged Barzillai declined the invitation of the king (2 Sam. xix. 38).²⁷ Bethlehem, therefore, is a name like the Persian *Khawarnaq*, which is connected with the verb *khordân*, to eat, or the German *Wurmlage*²⁸ which is used in old German chivalric poems for a place where banquets and knightly tilts, justs and tournaments are held. *Khawarnaq* near Hira²⁹ was a large square building with a spacious court in the center, like a caravansary.³⁰ In the Talmud this Persian word appears as *akhwarnêqâ*, which denotes a dining-hall.³¹ Hira was situated in the extraordinarily fertile boundary-land between the Euphrates and the Arabian Desert, a few miles south of Kûfa near Lake Nájaf.³² The court of the Lakhmid kings at Hira, famed in Arabian history and literature, was the most celebrated center in pre-Islamic Arabia, where, in the century preceding the appearance of Mohammed, poets from the whole of North Arabia were wont to assemble.³³ The castle of *Khawarnaq*

²⁵ Caravansaries are generally built in the neighborhood of a town or village, whereas khans, which provide both lodging and food, are located within the precincts of a town. The *lodging-place of wayfaring men in the wilderness* (Jer. ix. 2) does not refer to a caravansary (contrast Hauck's encyclopedia, cited above, at the end of note 6, Vol. 6, p. 264, line 54): for *ôrêhim*, wayfarers, we must read *ahrôn*, extreme, outermost; the Greek Bible has *stathmôs êschatos*.

²⁶ Contrast *Encyclopædia Biblica*, col. 2171, line 17.

²⁷ See note 91 to my paper cited above, note 21; cf. Hauck's encyclopedia, cited above, at the end of note 6, Vol. 2, p. 667, line 15.

²⁸ There is a place called *Wormlage* near Kalau in the district of Frankfurt-on-Oder. *Wormlage* means *lair of a worm*, i. e., dragon. Cf. the place-names Drachenfels, Löwenberg, Löwenstein, Wolfstein, Wolfsberg, Wolfhagen, Wolfsanger, etc.

²⁹ See Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder* (Leipsic, 1907), p. 119.

³⁰ See the cuts on pp. 815a and 3281b of the *Century Dictionary* and p. 278 of the *Calwer Bibellexikon* (Calw, 1912). A ground-plan of *Khawarnaq* is given on p. 19 of B. Meissner, *Von Babylon nach den Ruinen von Hira und Huarnaq* (Leipsic, 1901).

³¹ See Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Der babylonische Talmud*, Vol. 2, p. 86; Vol. 3, pp. 452, 547 (Berlin, 1901, 1899).

³² Cf. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 32, p. 1.

³³ Cf. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 18, p. 644a.

is said to have been built by a Roman architect, Sinimmâr, who was hurled from the building because he told the last king of Hîra, an-Nu'mân, the son of al-Mundhir (580-602 A.D.), that he might have constructed a superior edifice. The *reward of Sinimmâr* is repeatedly referred to in Arabic poetry.²⁹ The famous architect is alluded to also in a Turkish inscription found in Galicia.³⁴ Sinimmâr may be an ancient Babylonian name.²⁹

The name Bethlehem does not mean House of Bread, but House of Bait, i. e., halt for refreshment. The original meaning of *to bait* is *to cause to bite*, and Heb. *lishkâ*, Greek *lésche*, is a modification of Heb. *nishkâ* from *nashák*, to bite. The inn at Bethlehem, in which Jesus is said to have been born, may be the hostelry mentioned in Jer. xli. 17.³⁵ As there was no room for them in the inn, Mary laid her firstborn son in one of the recesses in front of the travelers' chambers along the sides of the interior court of the caravansary.³⁶ This antechamber may be called a *crib*, but it was not a stable, nor was the Babe placed in a manger. Neither David nor any of his descendants was born at Bethlehem: David's early home was in the neighborhood of Hebron, and Jesus, who was not a son of David, was born at Nazareth.³⁷

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³⁴ See H. L. Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, Vol. 3, p. 611 (Leipsic, 1888).

³⁵ If Jesus was born in that inn, its location must have been near the road from Jerusalem to Hebron, in the neighborhood of the modern hospital of the Sisters of Charity, not on the site occupied by the Church of the Nativity in the southeastern corner of the village.

³⁶ These recesses or arcades (cf. above, note 15) resemble the cloisters, or covered ambulatories, in some of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge or in some of the buildings of Bryn Mawr College (cf. above, note 30). The famous *bambino* in the Church of *Ara Coeli* in Rome stands in a tub set upright, so that this manger resembles a niche or recess in a wall; see the cut in the *Century Dictionary*, p. 435.

³⁷ See my paper "The Aryan Ancestry of Jesus," in No. 635 (April, 1909) in No. 753 (February, 1919) of *The Open Court*. See also *Johns Hopkins University Circular*, N. 316, pp. 4, 20.